

REMARKS

Applicants note that the previous Response obviated the prior rejection in view of US 5,976,694.

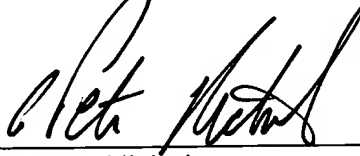
The pending claims are rejected as being obvious in view of US 5,698,322 to Tasi and EP 801 172 to Takeda and either HTT or TBNF. Applicants respectfully traverse. Claims 1 and 27 have been amended to specifically recite the difference in melting temperatures between the first biodegradable binder fiber and the second biodegradable thermoplastic fiber. The amendment is supported by the specification (see published application paragraph 42). The amendment was not previously presented because it was believed that the previous amendments and remarks put the claims in condition to be allowed.

The presently proposed amendment should be entered because it puts the claims in condition to be allowed and does not require any additional searching. As noted above, the present claims require a specific difference between the melting temperatures of the first biodegradable binder fiber and the second biodegradable thermoplastic fiber. This difference is important to achieve the claimed permeability and void volume upon thermally bonding. In contrast, the Examiner's proposed combination does not teach or suggest such a temperature difference. Without any such recognition or suggestion, the presently claimed web cannot be considered to have been obvious.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

Applicants believe the present claims are allowable and respectfully request allowance of the application. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4276 to resolve any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Peter Nichols", written over a horizontal line.

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